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Good Physician.
Dr. Joseph O. West.

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THE GOOD PHYSICIAN.

DR. JOSEPH O. WEST.

BORN IN BARNSTEAD, N. H., JUNE 21, 1823.

DIED IN PRINCETON, MASS., JANUARY 28, 1887.

*"Thy labors of unwearied love
By thee forgot, are crowned above."*

BOSTON:
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1887.



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DR. JOSEPH O. WEST.

In the beautiful village of Princeton, Mass., are gathered every summer, from all parts of the country, many people of intelligence, refinement and culture, and among the native residents there, these qualities are conspicuous, combined with force of character and quick discernment.

When a young physician finds early practice in such a place and continues in it, amid such surroundings, for more than thirty years, beloved by many, trusted by all, with an almost universal benediction from all classes, and hearty approval from persons of such various habits and diverse views of life, there must be something about him especially worthy of enduring remembrance and faithful emulation.

What the poet Whittier said of another was eminently true of the late Dr. West :

“ His daily prayer, far better understood
In *acts*, than words, was simply doing good ;
So calm, so constant was his rectitude,
That by his loss alone, we know his worth,
And feel how true a man has walked
With us on Earth.”

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Trials, no doubt, beset his path, for the cross, in some form, is the family badge of the children of God. He loved his home, and his union in marriage with Miss Ellen M. Gregory, of Princeton, was a source of unfailing happiness to him for many years. With parental fondness he gathered his children about him, and in all the years to come they will "rise up and call him blessed."

Outside of the family circle, too, he was the same unselfish, thoughtful person, daily exemplifying that charity that "seeketh not her own," and his memory is sacredly embalmed in the hearts of all who were blessed with his counsel or friendship. When called out in the night to face the wintry blast, with no expectation of pecuniary reward, he said: "I go for the love of God and humanity's sake."

In his quiet talks at the bedside of many a sufferer, he preached his sermons, and now "his works do follow him." The old Latin motto, "*Esse, quam videri*" ("To be, rather than to seem to be"), was the watchword of his life; and he wore it, like the frontlet on his brow, or the signet ring on his right hand.

His good deeds ripened for the harvest, and ere we dreamed of it, the great Husbandman put in the sickle to gather the golden grain for the heavenly garner.

He was to bid adieu to the hills and valleys he loved so well. The voices of Nature and the song of birds had long had a peculiar charm for him, but his spirit was now to be attuned to heavenly melodies. During the autumn nights he was often called to minister to suffering humanity. Severe cold and storms were fearlessly braved, till, on the 9th of January, he was taken seriously ill, but lingered till the 26th of the same

month, when, after hours of great suffering, nature was exhausted and he became unconscious, and on the morning of January 28th he sank to rest. "A morning without clouds" in a better world. A voice was heard from heaven, "Come up higher." He was not permitted to give *dying* testimony to the grace of Christ, but what was far better, he was enabled to give *living* evidences of its power.

His funeral was largely attended on the following Tuesday, at the Congregational Church, the main audience room being entirely filled. Fellow-townsmen, summer residents from neighboring cities, and fellow-physicians, by whom he was held in high esteem, joined in paying the last tribute.

The views of all were well expressed by one of the Boylston family (whose ancestral privilege of benevolence still descends to bless), in language of fine delicacy and force: "He had so identified himself with the welfare and best interests of the town, and was so much beloved by all that this loss seems a public calamity. . . . Let us rejoice and be thankful that Death cannot take from us the wealth of pleasant memories he has left behind."

No sooner was his demise known than testimonies to his unusual worth of character and professional skill appeared in the public journals.

The following, from the pen of the eminent lawyer, and his fellow-townsmen, the Hon. THOMAS H. RUSSELL, is a most fitting tribute:

"Dr. Joseph O. West, the highly respected physician of Princeton, Mass., died Friday. This unexpected

announcement will cause a real grief to many widely separated hearts. For a generation Princeton has been a health resort. Within this period many thousands have visited the place, and very many under conditions of health in which a good medical adviser was a matter of the first importance. During this long time no one who has had occasion for his services but will recall the quiet, modest mien, and the real service they have received at the hand of this model physician. A graduate of Dartmouth in the class of 1845, he settled in Princeton, after completing his education at the Harvard medical school, where he was graduated in 1848, and has been the sole resident physician there to this time. It is enough to say of his life in Princeton that he has left a friend in every resident as well as in every stranger who has had occasion for his professional services or the pleasure of his personal acquaintance. Dr. West possessed great professional skill, recognized by the many physicians who have had occasion to entrust to his care their patients for the summer months; and yet it was combined with a modesty so great as almost to shadow his merit, a skill that would have commanded eminent success in any place. Notwithstanding this he was content to spend, and literally be spent, in the service of a sparse population, dwelling in deep valleys and on bleak hills, to reach whom, for many months in each year, would tax the vigor of an Arctic voyager. He never seemed to make any distinction in his ministration between rich and poor, save that to the latter it was his happiness to bring more than professional remedies. There is but one voice saying: A physician of great skill, yet so modest that he alone seemed not to know it; a citizen who absolutely lived at peace with

all men ; a man without guile or an enemy ; Christian, unpretentious, of the broadest liberality and charity towards all men, who, nourishing a spiritual life in 'the closet,' in the 'secret place of the Most High,' while living was 'openly rewarded' with the esteem, honor and love of his fellow-men, and dying will long remain in grateful memory."

T. H. R.

Testimonies from the medical profession appeared on all sides. From Lowell, a venerable physician writes :

"At Princeton, Jan. 28th, died Dr. Joseph O. West, once a Lowell boy. His mother removed here from New Hampshire when he was quite young; he was fitted for college in our high school and graduated at Dartmouth in 1845. At that time he commenced medical studies in my office, and graduated at Harvard medical school in 1848. Soon afterwards he settled in medical practice in Princeton, where he has since resided. As this was my native place, I have often met him, and know the high estimation in which he was there held as a citizen and a physician. By education, genial manners, quick observation and thorough knowledge of human nature, he was admirably fitted for medical practice. Though located in a small country town, by reading and study he kept fully abreast in all kinds of medical knowledge, and was greatly respected as well as beloved by his professional brethren wherever known. His education, talent and experience fitted him for a larger field of business than a small country town, but it was the 'sumner company,' which, for a long time, we happen to know, prevented any change in his residence. While penning these lines, an obitu-

ary notice came to us in the *Boston Evening Journal*, describing points in his character better than we can do it, and every word of which we heartily endorse. By the initials, we infer that it is written by Hon. Thos. H. Russell, who, with his family, spends some part of his summer in Princeton."

NATHAN ALLEN.

From Providence, R. I., Dr. PARSONS writes :

"Providence people, and they are not a few, who frequent the beautiful town of Princeton, Mass., in the summer months, will feel a pang of sorrow at the sad news of the death of Dr. West. After an illness which took on the character of croup and pneumonia he died on Friday morning. For many years he has been the only practitioner in that town, and he gained very fully the confidence of residents and summer visitors. Cautious, observing and faithful, keeping abreast of the times by medical reading and by frequent attendance on medical associations, he was an excellent model of the good village physician. As patients are often sent to Princeton from the cities he had occasion to measure his practical attainments with those of physicians who are more widely known, and he did not suffer by the comparison. As a citizen Dr. West displayed the same qualities of caution, friendliness and practical wisdom, which marked him in his professional relations. He was above all things a peacemaker. His memory will long live in the hearts of the people of Princeton, as a good citizen and a beloved physician."

Another writes affectionately, though quaintly: "He was one of my best friends — tried and true as steel — no sham."

The Worcester Medical Society entered upon their records the following resolutions, and nothing has appeared more true and more touching than the personal tribute of Dr. T. H. GAGE:

WORCESTER, May 16, 1887.

MRS. WEST:

Dear Madam, — At the annual meeting of the Worcester District Medical Society, held May 11, 1887, Dr. T. H. Gage, in behalf of a committee appointed at the last meeting, read an obituary notice of the late Dr. West, and presented the following Resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That the Worcester District Medical Society has heard, with unaffected sorrow, the official announcement of Dr. West's death, and avails itself of the opportunity to record an expression of its high esteem for his character and services as a citizen and as a physician.

"*Resolved*, That to his bereaved and afflicted family it extends an assurance of respectful sympathy and affectionate remembrance, such as springs alone and spontaneously from a tender appreciation of their great and irreparable loss."

It was voted that the foregoing resolutions be adopted and entered upon the records of the Society and a copy sent to Mrs. West by the Secretary.

Very respectfully,

W. C. STEVENS,

Sec'y Worcester District Medical Society.

A Tribute to the memory of Dr. West, by Dr. THOMAS H. GAGE, of Worcester, at a Meeting of the Councillors of the Massachusetts Medical Society :

“Dr. West's was a rare and beautiful character, and one that might properly receive a more extended notice.

“To great natural abilities, trained, disciplined, and educated in the schools, he added high professional attainments, and the richer graces of a pure and consistent Christian life. And such natural endowments and acquirements, an intelligent and discerning people were not slow to recognize and appreciate. Thus it came about that early in his life, and to the end, he was respected, trusted, honored and beloved, as it falls to the lot of very few to be. Both profession and laity gave him, without reserve, their confidence and regard.

“As a physician he was remarkably modest and unpretending, yet judicious and skillful, and equal to any emergency. High professional attainments and skill, and the wisdom gained by experience, he held as sacred trusts, to be administered under a sense of great accountability, and he was faithful to the solemn charge.

“In his death, the community he had served so long, faithfully and well, and the transient summer visitors that throng the Princeton Hills, have sustained a great and irreparable loss. He was for more than thirty years their trusted medical adviser, their wise counsellor in times of trouble, and their friend ; and it was a touching scene as the stricken people, yesterday, moving in mournful procession, and in grief and tears, laid him under the shadows of the great mountain, tenderly to rest.”

The Board of Trustees of the Goodnow Memorial Building, at Princeton, also passed most appropriate resolutions on the loss of one of their number.

Clergymen, who had known him well, added their testimony, with hearts sorrowing for their loss, yet grateful for such an example of a consistent life.

The Rev. GEO. M. HOWE, his former pastor at Princeton (now of Lewiston, Me.), one equally beloved in Princeton, and who, with Dr. West, won the hearts of all with whom they came in contact, writes: "It seems as if we had lost a brother, for we had learned to love him much. He was not only a kind physician but a true friend and Christian brother. God bless his sainted memory."

A minister of the Methodist persuasion who had known him at Princeton—one of gentle spirit, and refined by suffering—wrote to Mrs. West, in a beautiful letter of condolence: "Go where we may, let our experience be what it may, we shall always feel that life to us was made richer and sweeter because of our acquaintance with Dr. West. Such, doubtless, was the influence of his life upon many others. It was not only the personal service which he cheerfully rendered to those who needed it, but his quiet mien, noble bearing and loving heart that made him beloved by all."

C. N.

An Episcopal clergyman, of Boston, wrote to his widow:

“The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance, and dear Dr. West’s memory will never die out with those who knew him, and to whom he ministered so tenderly, every summer, amid your beautiful hills.”

H. G.

A prominent business gentleman of Worcester, with rare discernment, sent the following appropriate tribute to one of the public papers :

“By the death of Dr. J. O. West, which occurred the 28th, the town of Princeton loses a citizen who will be deeply missed, not only by its own people but by hundreds from other localities who are accustomed to pass their summers there. He will be remembered by all as a skillful and sagacious physician, and as a genial, faithful friend. For more than thirty years he has been conspicuous among his townspeople as a wise adviser in all matters of public and individual interest, and has never hesitated to do his full share to encourage and help all who sought his aid. For this service his intelligence, quickened by a liberal education, and his broad, generous views fully equipped him. In his profession his reputation for rare judgment and ample knowledge was not confined to his town or county alone. He was entrusted with the care of grave cases that came to him for treatment each summer from this and neighboring states. He was an esteemed member of the medical society of the county. While many men of his attainments would perhaps have sought a larger field offering more opportunities for professional labor and consequent distinction, he was content to expend the energies of his best years among the people

he had in early life chosen as his friends. And who shall say he was not right? There was no one in that community better known or beloved than he. The record of his life is without stain, and the memory of his kindly face and voice brings to us an abiding appreciation of his many virtues."

A. G. BULLOCK.

Worcester, Jan. 28th.

Prof. BANCROFT, of Brown University, Providence, R. I., touched the cord which vibrates in many hearts, saying: "The news of Dr. West's death came to my family as a stroke of personal bereavement. He united to great skill, in his profession, a spirit of Christian kindness that won all hearts. His cheerful temperament enabled him to minister to the mind as well as to the body. The sense of loss which you feel, dear Madam, sends its shadows over many a household."

An excellent portraiture of Dr. West appeared from the pen of a friend and patient in Philadelphia, as follows:

"A man with a kindly face and voice, and of quiet and genial manners, of generous views and wonderful patience; leading a simple, Christian life, always taking up the nearest duty, faithfully fulfilling it in his own masterful way. A man of quick observation combined with reflection and determination; a patient investigator, possessing rare judgment and modesty withal. A wise adviser in matters of public and private interest, highly esteemed by his professional brethren, and beloved by those who were privileged to know him."

Responsive echoes were heard from New York City and other places far and wide. A valued and long-tried friend (Mrs. NEWBOLD), noted for her interest in all that pertains to the welfare of her race, and whose personal magnetism wins for her a wide circle of friends, says, most truly : “ Dr. West had a rare combination of fine qualities of character ; so much heart, so much integrity, simple genuineness of speech and manner, and so much acuteness of intellect, he was a tower of strength for Princeton in many ways.”

A significant testimony which, if there were no other, covers the whole ground, from one, whose practical judgment forbids undue praise and renders it valuable to all, appeared from the pen of Judge BARTLETT, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

SUPREME COURT CHAMBERS, KINGS CO., BROOKLYN,
January 31, 1887.

DEAR MRS. WEST :

I was greatly shocked and grieved to find in the papers an announcement of Dr. West's death. I have never known Princeton without his kindly and beneficent presence there, and it is impossible for me to realize that he is gone.

The appreciation in which he was held, not only at home, but in the far-away places all over the Union, from which many of his summer patients came, testifies to what ability and character can do, even in the most modest corner of the earth. The respect and affection which he inspired were such as are bestowed upon few medical men anywhere, and must have been most precious

to him, if he had any idea how highly and widely he was esteemed.

My judicial duties at this season are so exacting as to require my presence here every day, or I should not fail to be one of those who will come to Princeton tomorrow to attend the funeral.

I sincerely regret that I cannot be there thus to manifest the sense of deep personal loss which I feel in the death of one of the best men it has ever been my fortune to know.

With the sincerest sympathy, I am

Truly your friend,

WILLARD BARTLETT.

What more need be said? He sleeps "the sleep of the just," and his life of patience, self-sacrifice and love, form a wreath of household affection—a story too precious to put upon paper or on marble.

His widow and orphans, when faint and worn in Life's journey, will find their Lord and Saviour to be indeed "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," and can look forward with hope-lifted hearts "*until the day break, and the shadows flee away!*"

"Soon and forever, the breaking of day
Shall chase all the night clouds of sorrow away;
Soon and forever we'll see as we're seen,
And know the deep meaning of things that have been;
Where fightings without, and conflicts within,
Shall weary no more in the warfare with sin;
Where tears and where fears, and death shall be never,
Christians with Christ shall be, soon and forever."

H. GRAY,

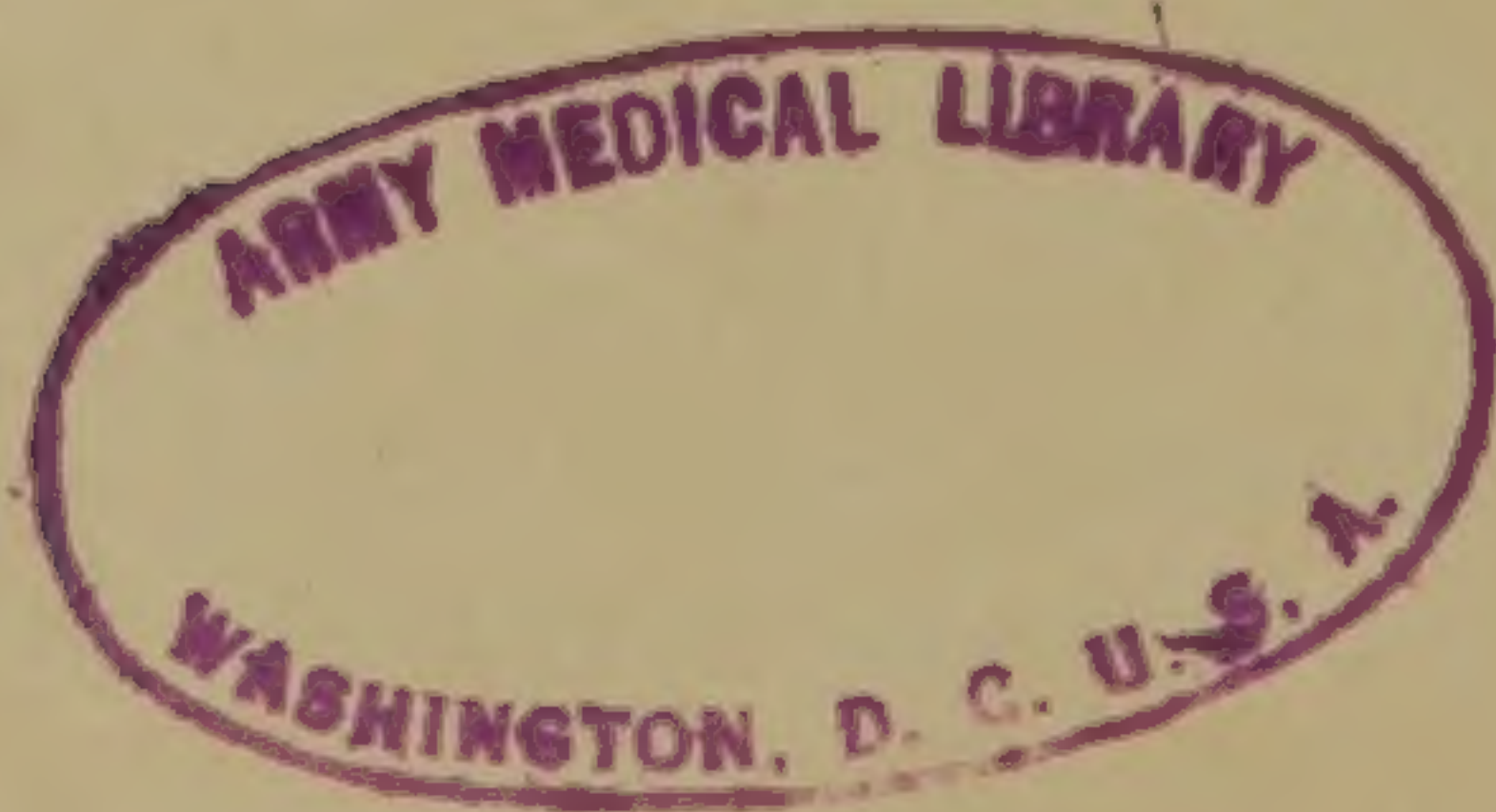
1 ASHBURTON PLACE.

BOSTON, Nov., 1887.

O blest Communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine.
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are thine.
Allelulia !

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again and arms are strong.
Allelulia !

The golden evening brightens in the west ;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes the rest ;
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the bless'd.
Allelulia !



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